

Teacher Evaluation: The Impact on How Teachers Understand Themselves and Their Identity

Kristina Hirsch

Proposal

Georgia Southern University

July 18, 2014

Title

Teacher evaluation: The impact on how teachers understand themselves and their identity

Key Words

evaluation, emotion, efficacy, identity

Proposal

Evaluation is a topic that most everyone can resonate with in one way or another. I myself take my classroom evaluations very personally and although I have never received a poor evaluation, I know good and well that if I were to receive a poor evaluation I would endure a great deal of emotional devastation. This study seeks to understand how male and female teachers respond to being evaluated and how their responses impact the way they understand themselves and their teacher identity. Teachers are leaving the teaching profession due to teacher burnout and stress. Zembylas (2003a) describe teachers as being emotionally exhausted and that teachers often feel powerless and lonely (p. 112). Golby (1996) wrote that teachers are overburdened with tedious tasks which is one of the leading causes of teacher burnout, stress, dissatisfaction, and disengagement from teaching (Zembylas, 2003a, p. 107-109).

Teachers also feel a lack of efficacy and competence due to the pressures placed on teachers by administration (Zembylas, 2003a). Teachers struggle with whether or not they are doing a good job. Teachers are overworked and have high expectations placed on them in regards to testing and student performance. Kelchtermans (1996) emphasizes teacher vulnerability. Teachers feel vulnerable because of school policy, professional relationships, and the lack of teacher efficacy (Zembylas, 2003a, p. 110). Teachers are reduced to managing student productivity and lack academic freedom in their classroom (Pinar, 2004, p. 27).

There appears to be a lack of research on emotion, especially in education. This is believed to be due to prejudices in the research, the fact that it cannot be measured objectively, emotions are typically associated with feminism, and because of this; emotion is researched more in psychological fields (Zembylas, 2003a, p. 104). The reason this is so important is because teacher stress is a key reason why teachers leave the field of teaching (Zembylas, 2003a, p. 113). If stress is one of the leading causes for teachers to leave the field of education, this is a topic well worth researching further. Sadly, the field of education is losing good teachers and if we want to keep these good teachers from leaving the field, we need to put in the time and effort to understand how teachers respond to things emotionally. Conducting further research on how teachers respond to evaluation and how their responses impact the way they understand themselves and their identity can help administration better understand how teachers are impacted by evaluation and why teachers feel the way they do. My hope is that this will lead to bettering the support teachers get in and out of the classroom to assure education isn't losing good teachers to other fields.

Zembylas (2003b) writes that feminist and poststructuralist studies "examine the role of culture, power, and ideology in creating emotion discourses; they highlight how teachers participate in this process by adopting or resisting these dominant discourses" (p. 109). In my study I will focus my efforts using feminist and poststructuralist lenses by using a mixed methods study using both surveys and semi-structured interviews. Teachers, especially women are bombarded with emotional rules that determine how teachers should feel and respond in certain situations. Teachers are faced daily with controlling their emotions because some are considered acceptable and others are not. Women come with a list of stereotypes. For example, women are considered to be caring and nurturing and are considered to be emotional beings

(Zembylas, 2003a, p. 118-120). For this reason, women often feel they have to hide their emotions. Both feminist and poststructuralist ideas focus on teachers using alternate forms of expression that don't cause them to internalize their emotions. In the end, we understand other people's emotions by first understanding and remembering our own (Zembylas, 2003a, p. 120).

References

- Golby, M. (1996, November). Teachers' emotions: An illustrated discussion. *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 26(3), 423-434.
- Kelchtermans, G. (1996). Teacher vulnerability: Understanding its moral and political roots. *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 26, 307-324.
- Pinar, W. F. (2004). *What is curriculum theory*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.
- Zembylas, M. (2003a). Caring for teacher emotion: reflections on teacher self-development. *Studies in Philosophy and Education*, 103-125.
- Zembylas, M. (2003b, Winter). Interrogating "teacher identity": Emotion, resistance, and self-formation. *Educational Theory*, 53(1), 107-127.